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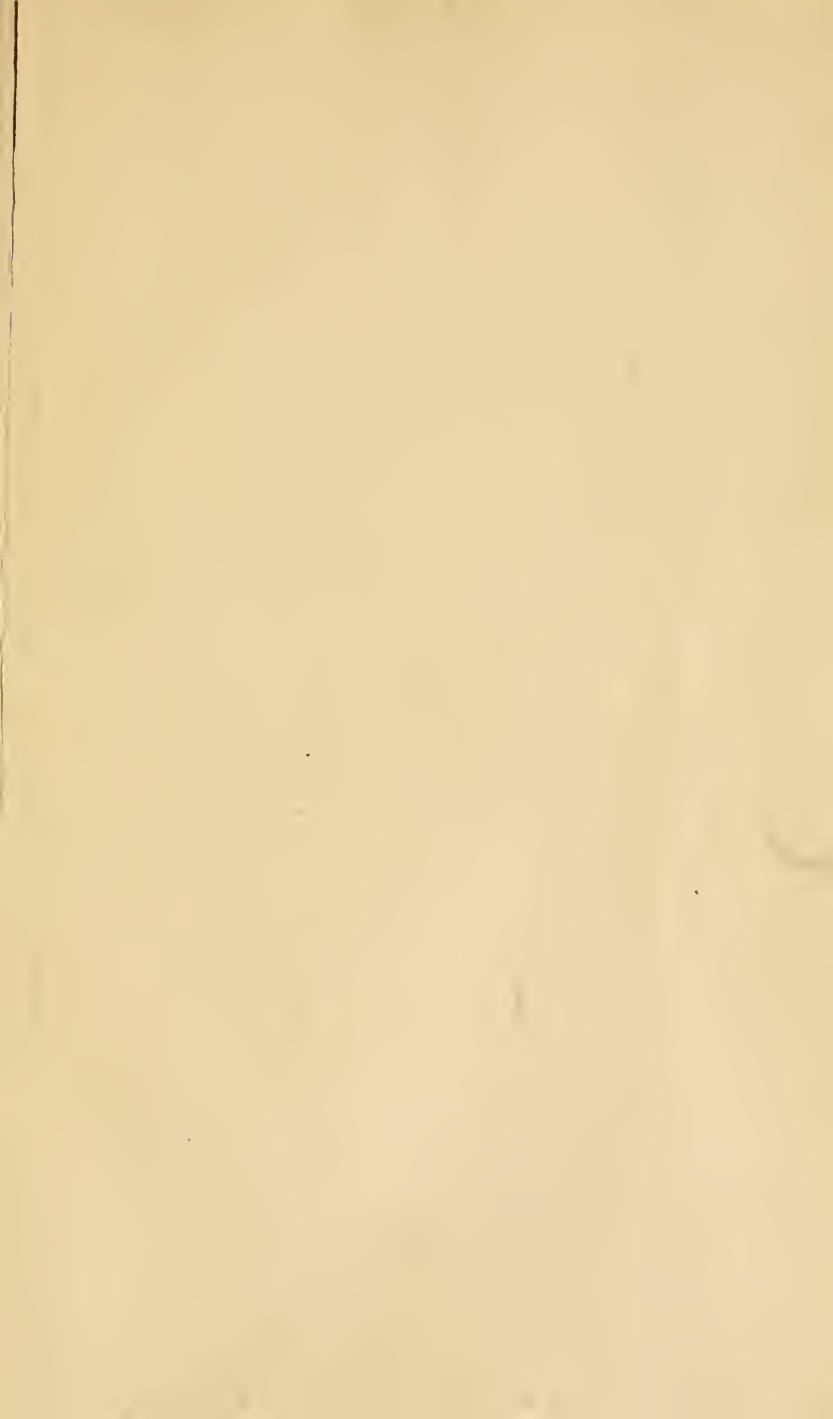
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Book 214



Department of the Gulf.

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HISTORICAL SKETCH

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OF

MAJOR GEN. N. P. BANKS'

CIVIL AND MILITARY

ADMINISTRATION IN LOUISIANA.

TENTH EDITION.

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NEW YORK, 1864.

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GENERAL BANKS'S ADMINISTRATION.

A GENERAL REVIEW.

LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT.

From the New York Evening Post.

[We have received the proof sheets of the following letter, which we lay before our readers as a statement professing to form a part of the secret history of the war:]

To Abraham Lincoln, President, &c.:

Mr. President: In New Orleans there is in use a very wonderful cordial called "The Eye Opener," which I have myself imbibed. As I fear you may not have tasted the nectar, I will tell you of some things I saw—and which may be useful, if not agreeable.

A curious prestige has long hung over General Banks, leading to the belief that he is a man equal to any emergency—one who can and will fill any position, even the highest, handsomely; and that his friends and the nation can rely implicitly upon his ability and perseverance. Thus, while he has few friends, he has many adherents who follow his fortunes. There is something in the lofty manner and elaborate deportment of the man—small as he is—which impresses the stranger, and checks the advances of vulgar minds. He has not been known to laugh since he took possession of the Gulf Department—no doubt for good reasons—as it was expected that he would speedily correct all General Butler's sins of omission and commission. He was also to satisfy foreign consuls and pacify domestic enemies. He was to do thus:

1. To reorganize society, and gently lead back a deluded people.
2. To reorganize the State, converting it from a slave State to a free.
3. To encourage and promote industry and commerce, and add to the wealth of the Union the vast supplies of cotton known to be wasting in the State.
4. To put down disloyalty by force of arms; to win victories; and, by destroying rebel armies in Louisiana and Texas, to dishearten the rebellion everywhere.

This seems a great deal for one man to do, and it is worth while to see how such various duties and complicated problems were grasped and solved by Banks, selected for the work by Mr. Seward and the President, not only because of the prestige attaching to the man, but also because of his versatility and many accomplishments. He dances well, and so is fitted to reorganize society. He makes good speeches, and so must be a statesman. He has been treasurer of a railroad, and so must understand the laws of trade and the springs of industry. He

has been given the title of Major General by a grateful nation, and so must be able to win victories for that nation. He certainly has three powerful ingredients which go to make up a great man :

1. Confidence in himself.
 2. Personal ambition.
 3. Deportment
- The last, not the least.

HE "REORGANIZES SOCIETY."

This phrase was in all months when I reached New Orleans, and Banks was busy nearly every night in "reorganizing society." The thing was seemingly at its height in the month of February, and party after party opened its welcome doors for me and other good people to enter. Mrs. Banks held weekly receptions at her own house, and a pleasing confusion was created by balls at the opera house, by masquerades at the opera house (of course carefully selected), by balls at the St. Charles Hotel, by balls at private houses. Dancing was the order of the night. Among the dancers none were more distinguished than Mr. and Mrs. Banks. This social regeneration was brilliantly decorated by United States uniforms ; and the eagles of the Colonel, the stars of the General, the stripes of the Admiral, were seen under every gas-light, while officers of the lower grades swarmed. These gentlemen found the life pleasant, and as they were "reorganizing society," they appeared to feel the importance of their public duties, and "sighed no more for the perils of the camp." Dress became more and more elaborate, and Mrs. Banks, who always dressed well, showed how fine clothes could be produced at "Olympes" by paying the price ; but as fine clothes are an evidence of high civilization, none felt inclined to find fault. Charitably disposed people also said : "These Generals who dance so well will fight equally well, and if Major General Banks dances until the cock-crowing, what matter so he likes it ?" During the period the new dance called

"THE IMPERIAL"

was learned in the military family, through much application, and was got through with tolerably well in public, much to my gratification : for having no genius for dancing, it is a perpetual miracle to me that men and women do get through the mazes without becoming thoroughly confused and giddy. I think, Mr. President, you will sympathize with me.

It was the wonder and admiration of others as well as myself that Banks, in the midst of his supposed labors, could find time and spirit to "trip it on his light fantastic toe," night after night, while it was known that he had the welfare of the whole people, black and white, hanging upon his wise and swift decision of the most important questions ; while it was understood, too, that he was preparing a grand army to strike somewhere and destroy our enemies wherever they could be found. But it is certain the dancing could not break him down.

Was society re-established by this process ? As a stranger I found myself introduced to a variety of agreeable people, but I found them to be either officers and their wives or adventurers like myself, ready for what might turn up. I could find among them but one of the old families of New Orleans. In a small way, however, I at last got to know some of the old inhabitants. They said to me :

"We are sick of this war ; wish it was ended ; wish it had never been begun. But what does Major General Banks expect to accom-

plish by dancing? Whether we sympathize with disunion or not, we have all lost friends in the southern armies. We are in sorrow; we are poor, and cannot dress as Mrs. Banks does. We must decline the bait: it does not tempt us."

One of the old citizens I discovered who approved of General Banks's methods of "reorganization." This was an old Mrs. Roux, who kept a costume shop. She told me, with much satisfaction, how good General Banks had been to her, enabling her to pay off her debt of eight hundred dollars, and to make "moche money" beside. There is at least one grateful friend gained in the Crescent City.

But whether it was worth while to undergo so much violent physical exercise, and such a mental strain as was demanded, to learn the "imperial" at General Banks's age, for the sake of converting one old woman, may be a question. So the winter slipped easily and rapidly away. There were two men who did not appear at these nightly festivities. One was General Stone (Banks's chief of staff), the other, General Franklin, in command at Franklin, on the Teche; and these men, Banks's admirers said, were the hands to execute the victories planned by his leading mind. General Lee was also hard at work organizing a strong body of cavalry, and was impatient for work. We shall see how they came out.

HE MAKES LOUISIANA A FREE STATE.

It was believed in New Orleans, Father Abraham, that you needed all the votes you could get to secure a nomination for a second term, and that it was of the utmost consequence that Louisiana should appear at that convention, favoring you if not Banks himself. Now Mr. Flanders and Mr. Durant had been at work organizing a free State movement, and as they were Mr. Chase's friends it might lead to danger. It was necessary to start a new movement. The Flanders people were in favor of amending the old constitution, abolishing slavery, and in due time proceeding to an election for governor, &c. This might be too slow. The new movement, led by Hahn and Banks, proceeded to an election of State officers first, and to a revision of the constitution afterward. It was clear enough that the latter party must win, for the whole military power of the Gulf Department was on that side. General Washburn, then in rapid advance in Texas, with nothing to prevent his clearing the whole coast, was recalled; Texas was abandoned, so that more of Louisiana might be occupied, and more votes be thus secured.

We have all believed that there were existing in Louisiana and Texas large numbers of real Union men, who only needed protection to insure their glad return to the old flag. It was found to be true, and wherever our forces appeared, and it seemed safe, the best people came forward and renewed their allegiance. Banks abandoned them. They knew they must fly or swing, and hundreds of them did fly, leaving their property, and in some cases their families, behind. They came to New Orleans, and while I was there a body of a hundred of them called upon Banks and asked relief, indemnity, protection. They got—words: were told they took the oath too soon, and were bowed out. The "deportment" of the General was unexceptionable. I understand there were many curses uttered, and the government which permitted such things was not deemed paternal.

We return to the free State movement. It is clear that Mr. Flanders and his friends did not at once fall into Banks's plan, and for a time no love was lost between them. Mr. Flanders decided to run for governor.

and Mr. Hahn of course ran. The press at once came into Banks's plans, backed as they were by the power and patronage of the whole Department, while Mr. Flanders had only the patronage of the Treasury Department to offer. Mr. Flanders unfortunately appeared to represent Mr. Chase, while Mr. Hahn was supposed to be Mr. Lincoln's candidate. The motions were gone through with on the 22d of February, and Mr. Hahn was elected. To-day it is plain that the whole thing was a clever piece of legerdemain; and, except the fine scenery of the inauguration, resulted in nothing. It is so considered by all I know.

But Mr. Lincoln gained prestige, and secured the votes of Louisiana in the Convention; and should he be abandoned, Banks becomes the successor.

Here the free State has rested. Hahn had no power and exercised none, while Banks and the military power controlled all. But on the 4th of April a Constitutional Convention was elected, which is now at work—we hope with good promise of success; and that in good time there will again be protection to the individual under the Constitution and law, and that slavery will be legally as well as practically extinct in Louisiana.

HE ENCOURAGES COMMERCE.

With gold worth 180 in national currency, cotton selling at eighty cents a pound, and the foreign exchanges steadily working against us, it is of vital importance to produce wealth which will take the place of gold. It is a startling fact that we are now paying two prices for our supplies and munitions of war, and thus are piling up our debt at the rate of two for one. But some people fail to remember that this debt has to be paid in gold, and the honor and the entire property and production of our country are forever pledged for the honest and full payment of this debt. It is not true that we are borrowing from ourselves, and that what goes out of one pocket goes into another. Gradually, if not rapidly, our bonds are being absorbed in Europe, and yet we are obliged to pay to outsiders the interest and principal in gold. If we got an equivalent, well and good, but we do not, and when pay day comes our people must send four or more thousand millions of wealth out of the country in some shape—which will be exhausting to us. It does not admit of a question that cotton is equivalent to gold, and should be saved, not destroyed. Such a view no doubt was taken by Mr. Secretary Chase, and the Treasury agents at New Orleans and along the Mississippi have granted such "permits" to merchants as enabled them to get out small amounts of cotton. Permits for "Trade Stores" at some points were granted, and food and supplies were allowed to go in limited quantities for the uses of the plantations upon which work had been started under General Banks's valuable labor orders. The policy of the Treasury Department seemed to be to deal with commerce as liberally as might be consistent with a condition of war. Under this protection the business of New Orleans had revived, and within a few months warehouse after warehouse had opened its doors, and the old secession merchants had begun to believe that New Orleans might resume its old prosperity, that they might yet collect their debts, and that, after all, the stars and stripes might not be so bad a flag to live under. People in the country, too, had begun to look to us for a market, had had a taste of "greenbacks," and were finding where their true interests lay. Some hopeless imbeciles say, "What is the Union sentiment based upon self-interest worth?" and so scorn the returning loyalty of men who hope to make money by it. They never knew that

government is instituted solely to favor the individual interests of men, and the government which does not do this is a curse and a blight. The Confederate government is a curse and a blight, and believing as we do that the Union is the opposite, we wish to convince the rebels of the fact. Under the Treasury regulations we were rapidly converting rebels into Union men, but some abuses and evils were incident to this system. It is unquestionably true that under cover of these permits for trade, supplies of various kinds did reach the rebel troops, and some allege in large quantities. There are always smugglers and scamps, and it is hardly advisable to increase the trade restrictions to such an extent as to force out honorable merchants, and thus abandon the field to the former class. We will not destroy *all* merchants because there are some rogues among them.)

Banks felt bitterly towards Mr. Flanders and the Treasury Department, because of these supplies supposed to reach the rebel soldiers, and this was a drop added to the cup already pretty full. He gave orders that no permits should be valid unless countersigned by himself, and as few had the key to his heart, few got permits; but some were permitted to ship salt in exchange for cotton, and so it was shipped. Commerce was in a rather languid state at the time the Red River Expedition was ready to start, and merchants counted upon the opening of a new region, filled, as it was, with cotton. Many of them owned largely of the staple there, having taken it from the planters in payment of old debts, and others had purchased it through agents sent into the country, while others stood ready to pay their "greenbacks" and receive their cotton so soon as Banks's victorious legions should open the way. The best estimates place the quantity of cotton west of the Mississippi, in Louisiana, at not less than 400,000 bales, of which 100,000 bales belonged to the Confederate States; two purchasing agents having been for a long time employed by them—Broadwell at Shreveport, and McKee at Alexandria. Through these agents great amounts had already been sent through Texas and Mexico to foreign ports, and some thousands of bales were already hauled to the Sabine waiting the chances of shipment.

Let us make a rough estimate of the value and uses to our Treasury of this 400,000 bales, upon the theory that we could and should have obtained it. 400,000 bales at, say fifty cents per pound, is one hundred millions of dollars, equivalent to so much gold. No one can say just what effect this vast sum would have had upon our currency, but it is believed by many that the difference between it and gold, instead of being eighty per cent. would have fallen to forty per cent., or even less. The entire purchases of the nation would have been so much lessened, and our own future debt reduced in the same degree.

The direct taxes upon this 400,000 bales paid into the United States Treasury would have been not less than twelve millions of dollars, in addition to the above-mentioned incidental benefits.

Sanguine people fondly dreamed that Banks's elaborate expedition into the cotton country meant to release the products of the country, and that the latent Union feeling there would be so stimulated by the benefits resulting to the population that it would be easy afterward to hold that portion of the State. Few believed that this expedition was intended merely to drive back Kirby Smith's ragged troops, who could return at any moment, if the low water of the Red river compelled us to fall back from Shreveport to Alexandria. The natural, simple, easy and right thing would have been to get possession of the C. S. A. cotton, and to allow private owners to sell or ship their cotton in exchange

for United States currency. It was plain that the possession of our currency would restore these long suffering people to their old loyalty, even if they had fallen away after false Gods, as many of them had not.

Sanguine people were right—the expedition meant cotton, but not for them. We will try to get at the facts, and so to an understanding of this matter. We shall see how ignorance or disobedience of the laws of trade has worked destruction and ruin. It is known to a few, suspected by many, that Banks had been offered the C. S. A. cotton west of the Mississippi by the rebel leaders. One offer made was thirty-five thousand bales, provided a portion of the price should be paid in supplies. This Banks declined, as it would to a certain extent have given aid and comfort to the enemy. The rebel General Walker had made various fruitless efforts of the same kind, and agent McKee had made some successful ones from the region below Alexandria. After some negotiations the whole C. S. A. cotton (over one hundred thousand bales) was offered to General Banks at a small price for “greenbacks.” This was declined also. Suppose Banks had paid for this in greenbacks, say twenty or twenty-five cents a pound, it would seem to have been a good bargain, as we should have got three dollars to their one, and the possession of such an amount of our currency would have probably been an “eye-opener” to some of the rebel leaders. Banks, however, being a statesman and political economist, had plans of his own. About this time, shortly before the moving of the Red River Expedition, there appeared at New Orleans a Colonel Frank E. Howe; he soon culminated, and was looked upon as the *Deus ex Machina*, who was to make the crooked ways straight. No one seemed to know just what he was for, but it was supposed he was sent by Mr. Secretary Chase to bring concord out of discord—to reconcile the jangle existing between the Treasury and the military power. After a good deal of dancing and masquerading, Col. Howe brought the disappointed Treasury agent, Mr. Flanders, and General Banks together at a select dinner party at his house, the object being to reconcile their political differences. There were present, also, Mr. Weed, Mr. Waldron, and a few other able merchants. The wines were good and the conversation extremely interesting; but, curiously enough, it turned upon cotton instead of politics. It is hardly worth while to go into details, but General Banks and Mr. Flanders buried the hatchet and struck hands. Plans were suggested and the programme agreed upon; justice should be done though the heavens fell, and C. S. A. should get neither aid nor comfort, but the Treasury should get cotton and Banks would do it. One of Banks’s economic notions was, that cotton being worth on the Red river before the arrival of our forces a certain sum (say ten or twelve cents), and the value being increased by the resumption of authority by the United States, say to fifty cents—the difference, whatever it was, should go to the Treasury, not to the owners of the cotton. ▢

▣ A parallel to this might be stated thus: A mob takes possession of the city of New York and drives out the regularly constituted authorities. During the reign of the mob property is almost valueless; but after a time government asserts its authority and the mob is suppressed. Government then takes possession of all property, and pays the owners what it was worth during the time it failed to protect them. This was General Banks’s notion. But the usage of civilized nations does not agree with the new doctrine—just the reverse. Injury and destruction of property during mob law is paid for to private owners in full by all Christian governments, and the government which fails to protect its citizens in their persons or property is justly held liable. Upon Banks’s

new doctrine his programme was based, and, briefly, it was this : C. S. A. cotton was to be seized, of course ; private owners, if loyal, were to be allowed to ship their cotton through the quartermaster only, who would sell it, and pay over two-thirds of the proceeds, if satisfied of their loyalty, and the balance at some future time—deducting, of course, freight and charges. Disloyal owners were to get what they could and when they could, and might be thankful if they could get anything. It was easy to see that their chances were small, and as everybody in the Confederacy had been forced to submit to the Confederate rule, or fly, or be hung, it might be difficult to satisfy a quartermaster as to the loyalty of any of those people, unless he was very anxious to be satisfied. It was plain, therefore, that these disloyal people would be glad to sell their cotton, even at a very low price ; and that even loyal owners, in view of the vexations and delays of the quartermaster's department, might be glad to sell for ready money. Upon these theories a magic circle was formed, familiarly called a "ring," and the initiated were to be on the spot, ready to exchange greenbacks for cotton, which cotton was to be shipped to New Orleans through the quartermasters, and once there was to be owned and claimed by them as loyal owners ; no questions were to be asked as to how they became the owners. I understand fifteen cents was to be the market price on the Red river ; and thus one can see that there was a very pretty profit resulting—how to be divided I did not learn. The names of the gentlemen composing this magic "ring" can be furnished, no doubt, by Mr. F. E. Howe.

One other arrangement was agreed upon, namely : that Mr. Treasurer Flanders should withdraw all permits to buy or ship products west of the Mississippi, and thus these people would see that, cut off from all markets, they had better sell to somebody on the spot. This part of the plan Mr. Flanders at once carried out, and the sudden embargo upon trade produced astonishment and stagnation in New Orleans. Passes of any kind to possible purchasers were also peremptorily refused by the Provost Marshals, and ex-Governor Wells's son could not get a permit to go home.

Now, therefore, and after the plan had been perfected, General Banks started upon the Black Hawk, on board which were some five or six gentlemen in black coats, whom men said were the "ring." But, according to his usage, Banks was ten days behind his time. Admiral Porter and General Smith had arrived on the ground first, and here comes in one of those confounded hitches which induce people in novels to say "Alas !" and in common life, "Oh, ho !"

Admiral Porter, upon his arrival in the Red river, began to seize cotton right and left, as prize for the navy, to put it aboard his barges, and send it off to Cairo ; and people say he had got wind of Banks's plan. Upon this Dick Taylor at once swore, "That every bale of private cotton should be burned, rather than it should be stolen by the damned Yankees ;" so the order went forth, and cotton blazed in every quarter. This was the sight which greeted Banks and his friends on their arrival at Alexandria, and men were aghast at the atrocity of Dick Taylor.

What was now to be done ? Did General Banks issue a brief proclamation assuring private owners who should comply with Mr. Lincoln's proclamation that their property should be respected ? Not at all. Did he do anything ? He waited for a week, seemingly in great tribulation, and then followed the army up the river, leaving some sort of directions in the hands of his quartermaster, which neither of them would confide to property owners in Alexandria.

The most loyal men could only get, "If you turn your property over to the quartermasters, it will be taken to New Orleans;" but how, when, or where they were to get their property or its proceeds no one could discover. In the progress of the business, Chief Quartermaster Holabird had arrived with one or two boats loaded with bagging and rope, which in due time was put into possession of a Mr. McKee, partner of Weed of New Orleans, and cousin of McKee, the C. S. A. cotton agent. By him it was disposed of to various parties, and, among others, to General Bailey, father-in-law of C. S. A. McKee, who had appeared from Texas as owner of three thousand bales of cotton, and having in his hands a protection from General Banks, issued as late as the 8th March. General Banks left, and General Grover was in command at Alexandria. He informed the citizens that they must take the oath of allegiance or leave the town, and that no sales of property would be recognized. People took the oath, and an election for delegates to the Constitutional Convention was held, one of whom was Judge Ariail, one of the best citizens of the town, whose loyalty no one impeached. We shall see how Banks's commercial plans worked for him.

Dr. Sullivan, an old and respected man of seventy, told me he had never been in such troubles. Taylor had burned his baled cotton, but had left his seed cotton untouched. General Grover told him he could not sell it. He had neither negroes, mules, bagging, nor money; and as his cotton might be burned any night by marauders, he was a beggar, and tied hand and foot.

Judge Ariail started for the Convention, having put his cotton into the hands of the quartermaster for shipment, with a *faith* that at New Orleans he should receive it. He called upon Quartermaster Holabird there, and was then shown for the first time an order from General Banks directing him to *take possession of property, ship it to New Orleans, and pay the proceeds into the United States Treasury*. Judge Ariail asked, "Will the Treasury pay me the proceeds upon my proving my claim?" Colonel Holabird replied, "I do not see how they can, as no money can be paid out except by act of Congress." Judge Ariail left the audience, feeling that he had been deceived and robbed by the agents of his own government.

"I can assure you, Father Abraham, that the Union sentiment was not greatly fostered by these proceedings of General Banks. People were much in the state of mind of the husband who looked on at the fight between his spouse and the bear—" Didn't mind which whipped, but a *little* inclined to favor the bear."

But another party was disgusted, and that was the "ring." It seems that Admiral Porter's seizures and the consequent burning had dismayed Banks, and he refused to carry out the plan as agreed upon at Mr. Howe's little dinner. So the gentlemen interested went sorrowfully back to New Orleans. Everything went wrong, and everybody was exasperated, simply because General Banks saw fit to defy the natural laws of trade, which allow producer and consumer to sell and buy to their mutual benefit.

The President's Proclamation has guaranteed to citizens in the rebellious states the rights and privileges of citizens upon their taking the oath of allegiance. Why should General Banks refuse these people the rights thus guaranteed? Why allow them or force them to take the oath unless he intended to allow them its promises and its benefits? The case seemed flagrant—and the cruelty wanton. It has been practised by Banks along the Texas coast repeatedly, and seems to be a growing policy in some of the departments.

Allow me to ask your attention and that of Mr. Secretary Chase to one gentleman in New Orleans, who seems to comprehend the laws of trade and has the ability to put them in force. This is Dr. E. V. Price, well known in New York for his high character and financial integrity. He now holds some unimportant position in the Treasury Department. I believe, and might be put at the head of such a department as that at New Orleans. But as he is nobody's nephew, is not a stump orator, and does not keep a large grog-shop, his ability may be considered at Washington of small account. Father Abraham, is not this kind of thing, if repeated too often, likely to disgrace you and the free institutions besides? Already the flavor of northern office-holders is rank, and may become putrid in that hot climate. There is a wide-spread belief among both military and civil officers, that whoever owns cotton is a scoundrel, and deserves to be robbed—therefore he can be bullied and hindered and mulcted with impunity—that so doing is doing God's service. Officers of all grades, from Banks down, therefore, treat him with indignity and contempt. A flour merchant or a dealer in pork may be a gentleman, but a cotton speculator is to be everywhere spit upon. →

WAPPLES AND DURELL.

Having briefly pointed to Banks's flagrant projects, I now come to the latest judicial positions taken at New Orleans by the highest tribunals. A person named Wapples or Wattles has procured the appointment of United States District Attorney, and a Mr. Durell has received the appointment of United States District Judge from yourself. Recently this Wapples has taken a broad, comprehensive position like this—(I state generally not technically). He holds that all merchandise now coming to New Orleans from the interior is to be considered as forfeited, is to be seized, put into court and to be condemned if possible. And he proceeds, therefore, to seize everything which arrives, and I am told Judge Durell refuses to release upon adequate bonds. A case of this kind was just decided—a French citizen, owner of cotton across the lake, had at last got permission from the Treasury agents, from Provost Marshal Bowen, from General Banks himself, to bring in his cotton for sale or shipment. Wapples steps in, seizes it, puts it into court, and Durell condemns it. It is to be sold, and the Frenchman's remedy is—a claim upon the United States Government—one of a million. Do you wonder, Father Abraham, that private owners burn their property? Wapples' and Durell's position, I take it, is much the same as if Mr. District Attorney Smith should seize and attempt to condemn every ship and cargo that reaches New York, and Judge Betts were to combine with him in the grand crusade against merchants and commerce.

You, Mr. President, may think these matters of little moment, but the people of the Gulf Department take another view. Wapples gets his fees at any rate—and he does not complain. He represents the law and justice of the United States in the Gulf Department.

HE WINS VICTORIES.

It is not necessary now to go into any detailed statements of the Red River campaign, and of the battles of the 8th and 9th April at Sabine Cross Roads and Pleasant Hill. The latter day Banks claimed a victory. Let me state a few facts.

Banks's army was marched up through the Teche country to Alexandria at an enormous cost, when it could have been taken by water at one-fourth the cost.

It was not in time to co-operate with Porter and Smith, and it is patent in the Department that Banks is never up to time.

It was delayed at Alexandria by the non-arrival of General Banks himself, and every day's delay gave the enemy time to concentrate his forces.

Banks was on the battle-field on the 8th, some three hours before the battle of Sabine Cross Roads, and approved of General Lee's disposition of his cavalry. He gave him also an order to advance against the enemy strongly posted, but was shown by Lee that such an advance must be disastrously fatal.

During the battle he is not known to have given any orders, except one; that was after the rout began, and he was told that two abandoned guns were loaded. He said, with his most impressive manner, "Let the guns be fired off instantly!" Yet, after the disaster at Sabine Cross Roads, the Commanding General was anxious to allow General Lee to ask to be relieved, and to appear to be the man who had failed to do his best that day, all of which General Lee peremptorily declined to do.

After the battle of Pleasant Hill, when the enemy was repulsed with heavy loss, Banks gave the order to retreat to Grand Ecore, leaving our dead and wounded on the field. The enemy at the same moment was retreating rapidly toward Mansfield.

To get together his grand army he has weakened every post in the Department, has abandoned others, and brought to pass a painful and violent feeling of distrust among all people. The cry is "Butler—not Banks!"

Nearly every general officer in his Department has repeatedly asked to be relieved; their names are to be found on the records of the War Department. He seems to confide in none and to dislike many.

He avers that he has been neglected and unsupported by the central government.

The conclusions forced upon the dispassionate on-looker in the Gulf Department are:

1. That General Banks's administration, in civil as well as military affairs, has been a lamentable and prolonged failure.

2. That he does not comprehend the plain, simple, and honest principles of statesmanship; or, if he does, he fails in their application. In other words, he does not show promptness or executive ability in either civil or military matters.

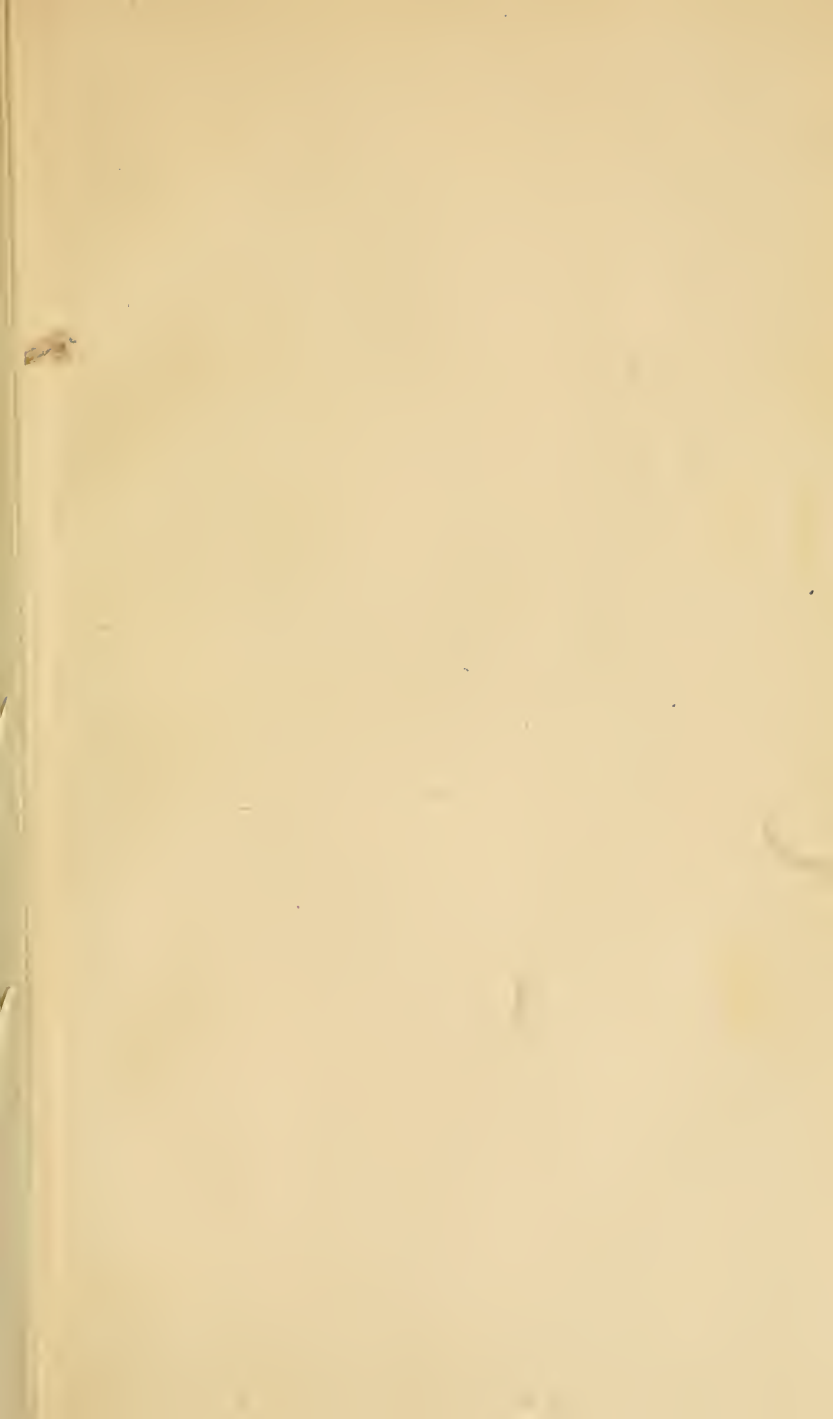
3. That he is a superior rhetorical mediocrity, who should as speedily as possible find his place.

My task, Mr. Lincoln, has not been an agreeable one; but the nation has suffered grievously from incompetency in high quarters, and for this suffering, and its continuance long after the people were in a state of exasperation, you have been properly held responsible. I need no apology, therefore, in earnestly asking your immediate attention to this case. Let there be no more precious lives wasted, or precious millions squandered, to preserve an elaborate reputation; but let the evil cease at once, and you will have my blessing.

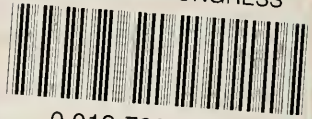
Respectfully your obedient servant,

P. W.

P. S.—Any further information I can give is freely at your service.



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